

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listings of Claims:

Claims 1-17 (canceled).

18. (previously presented) A tool guide comprising:
an elongate body defining opposed ends and a passage extending within the body between the opposed ends; and
an engaging formation defined within the passage of the body, the engaging formation being arranged to hold and provide a stop for a complementary engaging formation on a robotic arm so that a passage defined within the complementary engaging formation is aligned with the passage of the elongate body and a surgical instrument passing therethrough may be guided to a surgical site in a patient body when the elongate body is inserted through an aperture of the patient body.

19. (original) The tool guide of claim 18, wherein the engaging formation comprises a socket formation.

20. (canceled).

21. (previously presented) The tool guide of claim 19, which comprises an inlet which leads into the passage, the inlet being arranged to be accessible from outside the patient body when the tool guide is mounted in the aperture, the socket formation being positioned adjacent the inlet; and an outlet which leads from the passage, the outlet being arranged to be positioned within the patient body when the tool guide is mounted on the patient body.

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22. (original) The tool guide of claim 21, wherein the socket formation comprises a circumferentially extending surface defining at least part of the passage, the surface tapering radially inwardly in a direction away from the inlet.

23. (original) The tool guide of claim 22, which comprises an outer surface arranged to be seated in the patient body, the outer surface defining at least one gripping formation arranged to be gripped by tissue when the tool guide is mounted on the patient body.

24. (original) The tool guide of claim 23, wherein the at least one gripping formation comprises a rib extending helically around the outer surface.

25. (original) The tool guide of claim 23, wherein the at least one gripping formation comprises a plurality of ribs extending around the outer surface.

26. (original) The tool guide of claim 18, which further comprises a sealing formation sealingly covering the inlet, the sealing formation being arranged to permit the engaging formation of the robotic arm to pass therethrough.

27. (original) The tool guide of claim 26, wherein the sealing formation is at least partially formed from a synthetic plastics material.

28. (original) The tool guide of claim 27, wherein the sealing formation is at least partially formed from silicone.

29. (original) The tool guide of claim 18, wherein the elongate body is at least partially made of steel.

30. (original) The tool guide of claim 18, which comprises a cross-sectionally

circular tubular portion defining the outlet.

31. (original) The tool guide of claim 30, in which a wall of the cross-sectionally circular tubular portion tapers radially outwardly in a rearward direction away from the outlet.

Claims 32-33 (canceled).

34. (new) A method for guiding a surgical instrument to a surgical site in a patient body, comprising:

inserting a tool guide having an elongate body, a first passage extending through the body, and an engaging formation defined within the first passage, through an aperture of the patient body so as to be directed towards the surgical site in the patient body;

positioning a complementary engaging formation on a robotic arm with respect to the engaging formation of the tool guide so that a second passage extending through the complementary engaging formation is aligned with the first passage of the tool guide and the complementary engaging formation is held and stopped by the engaging formation; and

passing an end effector of the surgical instrument through the aligned first and second passages so as to be guided to the surgical site in the patient body.

35. (new) The method according to claim 34, further comprising:

operatively connecting the surgical instrument to the robotic arm after positioning the complementary engaging formation and prior to passing the end effector of the surgical instrument through the tool guide.

36. (new) The method according to claim 34, further comprising:

operatively connecting the surgical instrument to the robotic arm after positioning the surgical instrument to extend through the tool guide.

37. (new) The method according to claim 34, wherein the complementary engaging formation is a second tool guide attached to the robotic arm so that a shaft of the surgical instrument may be extended through the second passage of the second tool guide when the surgical instrument is coupled to the robotic arm.

38. (new) A medical robotic system comprising:
a first tool guide having a first passage, wherein the first tool guide has been partially inserted in an aperture of a patient body and directed towards a surgical site within the patient body;
a surgical instrument;
a robotic arm adapted to hold and manipulate the surgical instrument; and
a second tool guide attached to the robotic arm and having a second passage, wherein the second tool guide is positioned so as to be partially inserted into, stopped, and held by an engaging formation defined in the first passage of the first tool guide so that the first and second passages are aligned and the surgical instrument is extended therethrough so as to be guided to the surgical site.

39. (new) The medical robotic system according to claim 38, wherein the engaging formation is defined by tapering the receiving end of the first passage so as to initially have a larger diameter than the outer diameter of the second tool guide and then taper down to a smaller diameter than the outer diameter of the second tool guide.